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RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHOS #1239 2721049  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 291049Z SEP 06  
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7969  
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 7853  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS LAGOS 001239

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DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AF/EPS CAROL TRIMBLE, AF/RSA  
MARINDA HARPOLE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID ECON SOCI AFIN AMGT NI

SUBJECT: SSH/DHRF GRANT FUNDS SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT  
AND DEMOCRACY IN TROUBLED NIGER DELTA

REF: SECSTATE 118206

Summary

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**¶1. (U)** On September 19, the Consul General signed thirteen grant agreements to fund Special Self-help (SSH) and Democracy Human Rights Fund (DHRF) projects in the Niger Delta states of Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom. The SSH grants fund community development projects, including boreholes for water wells, classroom furniture, food processing equipment, school textbooks, a livestock building, solar panels, and a community library. The DHRF grants support human rights and democracy trainings to stop violence and to facilitate the entry of more women into the political process. All 2006 SSH/DHRF funds for Nigeria have been obligated.  
End Summary.

**¶2. (U)** With the signing of thirteen grant agreements by the Consul General on September 19, Post has obligated funding for 2006 Special Self Help (SSH) and Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) programs in the Niger Delta states of Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom.

Community Development Projects

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**¶2. (U)** The 2006 SSH program will fund eleven community development projects in the Niger Delta region. These projects will benefit over 180,000 people in communities in the Delta, which despite its oil wealth, is one of Nigeria's least developed areas.

Democracy Training Workshops

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**¶3. (U)** The DHRF grants will fund democracy training workshops through two Niger Delta organizations. One organization will invite community and youth leaders from ten communities in Rivers State to a "Training Workshop to Stop Violence," to participate in activities that promote nonviolent political activism. The other grant recipient will hold a three-day workshop, "Mainstreaming Women into the Political Process in Nigeria's Niger Delta States." At the workshop, women will be trained in the skills needed to have a stronger voice in local decision-making processes and to participate more fully in local elections.

United States a Proud Partner in Projects

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**¶4.** (U) In his remarks at the signing ceremony, the Consul General commended the SSH and DHRF recipients for striving to improve the social and economic conditions in their communities, and encouraged them to continue their efforts. He urged Nigerians to embrace political democracy and live its values. He stressed that the United States is a proud partner, not a "boss or a director," in the projects.

Signing Receives Press Coverage

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**¶5.** (U) Articles describing U.S. assistance to the Niger Delta region and the Consul General's speech appeared in two regional newspapers, The Punch and The Daily Independent.

CG Visits Two Project Sites

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**¶6.** (U) The Consul General visited two project sites. A hospital in Delta State uses its FY2004 SSH-funded generator to operate equipment. In Asaba, the community will install rice-threshing equipment with their SSH grant.

BROWNE